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THE PROBLEM OF SYNDICALISM

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As I wish chiefly to ask what our attitude is to be before the issues which syndicalism raises, I shall first give but the baldest statement of such theory and practice as are supposed to distinguish the movement.¹

We have to think of it as turning away from all that state socialism means and making its appeal to the trade union and, in this country, to whatever convulsive mass-action it can inspire in the labor world. It talks garrulously about Marx, but does not care a fig about him or for his theories, except the class war. Led by Sorel, there has been most incisive criticism against Marx, closely in line with that of Bernstein and the Fabians. There is fine sport with almost every destructive economic formula, except his generalizations about class antagonisms.

In carrying through this war, syndicalism is to gain its end chiefly outside politics. This is to be done, not in the spirit of the older individualistic or philosophical anarchy, but by a kind of crowd-anarchy,—an anarchy of federalized minorities, contemptuous of democracy with its majority rule; even fighting proportional representation because it lets the masses in.

If it *is* a war of classes, syndicalists take the logic of it. They clutch at the pragmatists because the Bergsons seem to give the world, soft as wax, into hands that wish to mould it over after their own will. This "creative evolution" thus avoids the hardened fatalities of an economic determinism.

But all that theorizing has not a tithe of the value for us which is possessed by their practical ways and means. How is this war-concept to be applied so that capitalism with its wage slavery shall tumble about our ears? Here is the line for direct action and sabotage en route for the General Strike.

A polite definition for sabotage would be, "withholding one's efficiency." If the employer is too obstinate, go a step further and cripple the efficiency of the machine or spoil the product. If we think of what popular science, chemical and other, is putting into the hands and brains of unlearned folk, sabotage is a very

¹ I have made no distinction in this paper between syndicalism and "industrial unionism" because the distinction seems to me to have little or no value.

terrible weapon. To shirk work, or even to spoil it, is an ancient practice if pay or conditions were felt to be unfair. But the tactics of the modern sabotier are brought up to date. They have been refined and skilfully pitted against the sensitive, highly organized business plant of today. The wise syndicalist cares very little for the old noisy tumult in the street or on the barricade. He knows that the modern street, armory, artillery and police system have the whip hand over all such futilities. It is because he knows this, that he carries his weapon from the street into the shop, the mine, and the mill. Silently and unobserved, he can do here a far more deadly work. He can strike at the very heart of capitalism, the very thing for with capitalism exists—profits on sales.

But this is by no means all that the new weapon reaches. Like the sword in magic arts, it is invisible against the enemy. Here, sheltered in the very house of the employer, he can use his weapon and, at the same time, beat the soldier and the police. Unless he is clumsy at his work, he can inflict his wounds without affronting an ordinance or a law. I have heard impassioned appeals to "keep within the law," and thus give militia and public officer no possible excuse, because, as one speaker put it, "You can reach the wad of capital as silently as a pickpocket." In many recent disturbances in the United States, the I. W. W. leaders tried much more anxiously to keep the peace than did the police. This was done, not that they cared for the law, but because from their own point of view it was stupid to make extra trouble. When we remember the youth, the variety of nationalities, the lack of discipline in the large majority of their strikes, the one outstanding marvel is that so little violence has occurred, and our public authorities, police, and police courts have an unhappy share of responsibility for such violence as did occur.

It is this blundering, moreover, which draws factions together which would otherwise remain apart. It drives the syndicalist to use his weapon of destruction and inefficiency still more secretly and silently where he is safe and snug beyond the protectors of law and order—soldier, police, or courts.

Beyond this, if further need arises, is the quick, sharp, and unexpected strike, which will be so much less costly that the poorest and newest unions, or even those without organization, can engage in them. Give us, then, the one Big Union, sweeping in the labor mass irrespective of vocation, and a federated power is at hand with which capital cannot cope.

If we add to this, that syndicalists seem honestly to believe that Fabianisms and reforms of all sorts are vicious, because they merely prolong the final surgery without in the least evading it, we have the essential outlines of this newest thing in the way of economic and social deliverance. It all means that parliamentary and legislative procedure moves so slowly and so lamely that an outside stimulus is thought necessary—a more vehement, unencumbered and direct impact of mass-action.

It is this which raises a question of genuine speculative interest. Social growth, especially in revolutionary moments, has depended very largely upon the help of extra-legal agitations and even in coöperation with forces as directly lawless as Northern defiance of Fugitive Slave Acts. Whether at any time or place social and economic maladjustment has reached a stage which requires or excuses such outside attack, is a betting issue settled only by experiment. Syndicalists are betting that capitalism is now at a point of dangerous instability which requires treatment not prescribed by doctors and nurses in good standing. It is speculatively conceivable that they are right; conceivable that, in addition to all that reform and regulatory legislation can perform, the whip and sting of more and other incentives are also required. If this should prove true, the future will have a very different moral judgment about syndicalism from our own.

The only way known to me of dealing either fairly or intelligently with my subject is at once to raise two questions. First, of what is syndicalism a part; to what larger whole does it belong? Second, are capitalism and the wage system so far losing hold upon what is vital to their own security as to require profound readjustment?

Those who are angered and inconvenienced by the coltish ways of our I. W. W. insist upon ignoring them or treating them as a bunch of outlaws quite venomous enough to be exterminated, if it can be quietly and diplomatically managed. A pat example of this perversion is just at hand in a sixteen-page bulletin of the New England Civic Federation. It tells of the equity suit brought to compel an accounting for money contributed to I. W. W. leaders. In the midst of the Lawrence strike, while funds were pouring in, the rumor spread that these were being used for all sorts of purposes besides relief to strikers and their families. There never was the slightest doubt that this was true. It is as old as history that funds gathered on the fighting line in revolutionary uprisings have been recklessly used. They have gone "for the cause." They

have gone to strengthen it where, at the moment, the need seemed most urgent. It is notorious that these uprisings sweep in (like the Garibaldi following) some shady adventurers and pretty squalid blackguards.

To the letter, this is true of the I. W. W., and nobody knows it better than the best men in the movement. It is from these that we hear of the "scavenger organizers." Now the New England Civic Federation bulletin will have it that the whole pack of them is made up of "scavengers." In its words, "All this number are men belonging to the local organization, the national body, and managers of I. W. W. newspapers. All seem to be deep in the mire." "Semi-starvation and suffering on the one hand and plenty of money on the part of the leaders, big and little" . . . local leaders were "faithless," and national leaders "mercenary." To quote further, all are "simply oily-tongued adventurers."

All that can be said of this is that it is the one attitude to *avoid* if we wish to see and understand. Our I. W. W., invaded and sometimes swamped by raw and inarticulate immigrants, is sorely handicapped for carrying out an orderly protest. The kind of lives they live in our industrial centers; the sort of politics they are taught; the newspapers they first learn to read, do not inspire law-abiding habits. Quite as fatal is it that the leadership under which these are bound to come will reflect but too faithfully all the ignorance they bring here and also all the devious things we teach them.

These are facts for which some allowance must be made. But the point here raised is that the I. W. W. is, first, a part of the whole syndicalist movement in the world, as that it is also a part of the whole socialistic and politically radical defection against the economic and political order of our time. Syndicalism is one of the extremer, cruder, and more passionate forms of this attack. Without quibble one must admit that if capitalism is as far gone; if it is as rotten and undermined as most syndicalists maintain, their methods are logical enough. It is because we know fairly well that they overstate their case in this respect that serious discussion of this topic seems fantastic to many sober folk.

Yet syndicalism will have serious treatment just about so far as one thinks capitalism and the conservative property concept are on the defensive. Even if we believe that the essence of capitalism and private property in interest and profit-bearing forms are to endure for any future worth while discussing, it is plainly possible to maintain that changes so radical are necessary, as to

justify every extreme of critical ferment required, first, to startle, then, to educate, that body of opinion without which no change is possible.

If there is one fairly trustworthy inference about revolutions, it is that the blind refusal of those who hold the seats of power, to yield and adapt themselves to the new exigencies is at least as dangerous to "order and progress" as are the outside agitations.

Let us look for a moment at one aspect of this hostility to those who have held dominant economic power. Wholly irrespective of our likes or dislikes, is anything more eventful happening just now than the rapidity with which power is passing to the people? The whole story of regulating monopoly and great industries is only one record of this fact. Politically, the referendum, recall, initiative, popular election of senators, and the like, have the same significance. All the secrecy and monopoly in caucus and conventions have become as intolerable as have the corresponding absolutisms in the business world. A third and perhaps still more momentous sign of this shifting of power and control is the growing determination to deprive the courts of what is widely *felt* to be too much power: a too absolutist, too mysterious: too "divine right" kind of power. It is no longer the rabble that is saying this, but men at the head of law schools, professors of political science, and able lawyers. In Brooks Adams' *Theory of Social Revolution*, just published, all this is summed up through a series of judicial cases, with an interpretation of Mr. Roosevelt's "recall of decisions" that is full of instruction.

If, for the moment, we can so far detach ourselves as to look solely at the fact of what is happening in this transfer of power (a) from capitalistic control, (b) from the older political control, and (c) from judicial control, we shall be putting on record precisely what constitutes this revolutionary change. However uncouth, syndicalism is a part of this shifting equilibrium and as such it must be treated.

We know that the main contest is over the control of industry and the profits of it. Those to whom power is passing, not only believe, but they have now got plenty of evidence that capital—even if not playing with loaded dice—has controlled forces—economic, political, inside information—which have enabled it, and still enable it, to take an exorbitant share. At the present moment, in practically every land, the challenge takes legislative forms in hundreds of investigations and reports: in income and inheritance taxes, up to the Lloyd George land scheme, and all the

network of regulation, which cannot possibly be carried through without the profoundest changes in the *control* which capital has held both in business and politics.

Just as significant is labor's attitude toward the new measures with which capital proposes to defend itself. These vary from court injunctions to the stop-watch. Look for a moment at this quite minor example. As capital became conscious of friction in the form of waste, Mr. Taylor appears with his "Efficiencies." We know how absolutely necessary these are, and how considerable a part labor organization has had in purposed inefficiency, but my questioning goes back of this. Why, as capital clutches at this device, does labor sullenly kick against it? Of course syndicalist and socialist sheets the world over have for it only guffaws. But old and disciplined trade unions also kick. As able a paper as the *New Statesman* warns against it, and all for the same reason—an inveterate suspicion that capital will too exclusively control the new agency. If it lies within the power of the employer to satisfy labor that its suspicions are unjustified, the system may have the field; but it is a fair question if those who represent capital can furnish such proofs without sacrificing more control than they will be willing to yield.

This all seems to mean that the revolutionary impulse within the economic system has reached a stage and has a backing of public opinion which makes all indiscriminate attack on syndicalism as dangerous as it is futile. Neither public authorities nor employers can act in this age as if syndicalism was a crime. It has its criminal manifestations to be met after their own nature; but syndicalism is immensely more than this. It is an energetic part of the whole revolutionary movement bent upon profound structural changes in the competitive system and in the political forms which are so largely a reflection of that system. Syndicalism, as a whole, is as legitimate and as desirable as outside critical and protesting opinion ever has been or can be. It is as much a part of social growth as are the resisting forces classed under the term "law and order."

To see it, then, in its relation to the entire body of revolt against those economic and political sanctities under which private property shelters itself, is to see it as it is.

It is also as unquestionably akin to the renascence of the guild idea and a vocational emphasis which makes some of the shrewdest contemporary observers think that political representation should

take account of these facts.² Syndicalism stultifies itself by carrying this vocational emphasis to an extreme as if all geographical bases of representation were to give way. Apart from the kind of work done, the dwelling place will also have its interests to maintain, but syndicalism has to be thanked for regimenting the wage worker along broader lines than those of the craft and insisting upon more substantial political recognition of these vocational entities.

There is nothing now more evident within the socialist following than that the consumer point of view has had too extensive hearing. However much they may be organized in state and city, the labor groups as producers have to have their own innings as syndicalists suggest.

What for example is more significant than the recent rise of the trade union *inside* the English Coöperative Movement? As the profit-sharing idea fails, the union asserts itself and even raises a strike fund. It is the distinct recognition that employees have been overlooked; that their interests as producers do not run quite level with those of consumers, and must be stoutly maintained. They all know that consumers' coöperation is a greater and more vigorous force than ever, but that the shop workers must make their own fight. In the authoritative Jubilee History of the C. W. S., just published, this assertion of the shopman is frankly justified, though the trade union label with its awkward consequence for coöperation is derisively rejected.

This larger revolt includes anarchists, communists, socialists, single taxers, and a most formidable contingent of radical politicians the world over. If in some color scheme this protesting multitude could be mapped out, syndicalism would have its own tint differentiating it a little from anarchy and communism, more from socialism and collectivism, but so shading into all of them as to baffle the hardest attempt to preserve outlines.

Syndicalism has already produced its "reform branch" of opportunists who differ in no conceivable particular from multitudinous socialists of more radical temper. The withering criticism which so many socialist veterans have inflicted on syndicalism would lead one to believe that it had nothing in common with socialism. The running fire of vituperation against socialists which fills the syndicalist press, would confirm this view. Yet

² See, for example, the remarkable pamphlet just published by that veteran investigator, Charles Booth, *Industrial Unrest and Trade Union Policy*.

everywhere syndicalists are found hotly insisting that a common camp includes both them and socialists. Both alike will socialize the three rents; both lay stress on the "class struggle." The socialist view of the State, when properly democratized and the consequent uses of political action, offer a very radical difference from syndicalist tactics. It is in the main the logic of this difference in the concept of the State which gives us such special shade of purple as syndicalism must have upon our map.

What is not, however, to be overlooked is that in time of strife these bodies will help each other. As in time of arms laws are silent, they will forget all theoretic variations when the struggle is on. If in future the contests with capitalism are to be more frequent and more bitter, the inclusive total of this revolt will act together on the firing line to such extent as to obscure all the solemnities of the separate programs.

It is nothing less than the whole mass of this critical alienation which capitalism has to face. It must face it at a time when a hectoring governmental regulation seems to be on the side of the critics. Ex-President Mellen has long said privately that the railroads would be worried into state ownership, but he now says it openly and defiantly.

That capitalism is, secondly, so far losing its hold as to make necessary very radical readjustments, is conceded by so many, and from such surprising sources, that agitators of every hue have an easier case. I submit two illustrations which are not to be patronizingly ignored because their authors are dubbed eccentric. Their judgments have much in common with a huge body of opinion of the most respectable sort upon this issue.

The first illustration is from a special adviser of mercantile and financial practitioners who are supposed to know what they want and how to get it. Some 3500 of them pay him yearly a quite astonishing sum for his warnings and suggestions. In a recent barometric sheet he tells his subscribers, bankers and merchants that the labor fight is only just *beginning*. He then continues:

I also wish to warn you that the movement will—in some form—continue to grow, because it is, in my opinion, *founded on an economic fact, namely, that the labor problem will never permanently be solved until the workers actually own the mills and other private enterprises* as the state or nation actually owns the railroads and *public service* properties, however much we dread both events.

The great fundamental question between capital and labor will never be settled by arbitration boards nor through the joint control of industries by representatives of labor and capital. *One of these two opposing interests*

must and will ultimately rule. Wise are the bankers, manufacturers and investors who recognize that it will be labor which is to rule. If so, this means that labor must ultimately acquire the industries, as capital will not much longer rest content with present conditions. Thus the question is as to the *method* by which this change in ownership may be brought about.

In his own large lettering he says:

THEREFORE ALTHOUGH WE MAY DESPISE THE LEADERS AND CONDEMN THE METHODS OF THE I.W.W.'s, WE MUST NOT LOSE SIGHT OF THEIR ULTIMATE AIM, AS UPON THIS AIM DEPENDS THEIR FUTURE GROWTH. IN SHORT, THE AMERICAN FEDERATION OF LABOR PROFESSES TO BELIEVE THAT THERE CAN BE TWO HEADS TO A MILL OR BUSINESS AND THAT IT CAN BE OPERATED JOINTLY BY CAPITAL AND LABOR. THE INDUSTRIAL WORKERS OF THE WORLD STATE FRANKLY THAT ULTIMATELY THERE CAN BE BUT ONE HEAD,—EITHER CAPITAL OR LABOR MUST RULE—AND THAT WE ARE TO SEE A FIGHT TO THE FINISH. I REGRET TO ADMIT IT, BUT I NEVERTHELESS BELIEVE THAT THE I.W.W. THEORY IS THE MORE CORRECT, AND MANY GREAT MANUFACTURERS RELUCTANTLY AGREE.

Of course, I make these statements to clients only in strict confidence and these facts should be so treated; but I do urge clients to recognize them and prepare for such events as follows:

(1) BY CONTRACTING ONE'S INTEREST IN CERTAIN KINDS OF BUSINESS AND GRADUALLY "GETTING UNDER COVER."

(2) BY PURCHASING ONLY SECURITIES WHICH ARE ISSUED ON A BASIS MUCH BELOW THEIR LIQUIDATING VALUE.

(3) BY DEVELOPING HEALTH AND OTHER ASSETS WHICH ARE FAR MORE IMPORTANT THAN MONEY, AND WHICH CANNOT BE TAKEN AWAY.

(4) BY TRAINING ONE'S CHILDREN, BOTH BOYS AND GIRLS, TO BECOME PRODUCERS, AND LEARN SOME TRADE WORTH WHILE BY WHICH THEY CAN SUPPORT THEMSELVES IF NECESSARY.

IT WILL, HOWEVER, CONTINUALLY BECOME MORE DIFFICULT FOR THE IDLE WELL-TO-DO TO LIVE WITHOUT WORKING. THE ENTIRE WORLD IS AWAKENING TO THE POWER WHICH DEMOCRACY GIVES AND THESE POWERS WILL SOON BE TRIED. Those of us who have been lazily living on what we have inherited are in the same position as were the rich monks of Europe before their properties were seized by the state. For centuries these church orders waxed rich because they were able to make the people believe in the sacredness of their organizations.

These opinions of Mr. Babson would have surprised me much more, if within very recent years one did not hear men of large experience in financial affairs, when they are in a detached speculative mood, express opinions differing in no important particular from those just quoted. After I had read them, I wondered how

soon I.W.W. evangelists would be found flaunting this barometric utterance before their own hearers and parading it in their press. I did not have to wait two days for the one, nor a week for the other.

They seize these concessions just as they do the startling criticisms of the English land system by Lloyd George, the onslaughts upon capitalism by a statistician and parliamentarian like Chiozza Money, and the scathing strictures by men of science like Sir Oliver Lodge, Professor Ostwald and Alfred Russell Wallace. These utterances would have no place here if they were not a most formidable part of revolutionary opinion now at war with capitalism, with the wage system, with property rights as now interpreted, and *syndicalism is a conscious and aggressive part of this total*. Out of the larger revolutionary fellowship it gets support and a deepened belief and security in its main objects. Once to see this, seems to me to lift the movement where it should receive neither lazy inattention nor contempt.

The other illustration is from that most formidable publicist, Mr. Brooks Adams. In the volume referred to, we are told roundly that the revolution is on: that capitalism is not only on the defensive, but has neither the temper nor the administrative ability to hold its own. His first chapter is entitled, "The Collapse of Capitalistic Government." Of his own craft, the law, he writes (p. 214): "And as capital has had now for more than two generations, all the prizes of the law within its gift, this attitude of capital has had a profound effect upon shaping the American legal mind. The capitalist, as I infer, regards the constitutional form of government which exists in the United States as a convenient method of obtaining his own way against a majority, but the lawyer has learned to worship it as a fetish." He sees no greater danger than in what he calls the "universal contempt of law incarnated in the capitalistic class itself." "In the United States," he adds (p. 217), "capital has long since owned the leading universities by right of purchase, as it has owned the highways, the currency and the press, and capital has used the universities in a general way to develop capitalistic ideas."

Syndicalists only change the dialectic when they insist that wage earners are entrapped in a system which filches a part of their earning, and the task of capitalism is now no less appalling than that of having to *prove* to the disaffected that this exploitation is not true. It has become the practical assumption of political radicalism, of hundreds of publicists and every variety of

intellectuals, as well as trade unions and collectivists of all sorts, that labor is defrauded by artificial privileges which capitalism has made its own.

It seems to me possible to state with some precision what our attitude should be in spite of all the scare words. It is true that inherent in it is the lunge toward anarchy, though of the federated type. This is apparent in its refusal to submit to the discipline of organization. As inherent is the drift toward organization with the necessary uses of political action, compromise and control of factional and minority opposition. This gives us again the old contest and see-saw in about every step of what we know as modern socialism. That syndicalism is to be tested and tempered in this same furnace is certain.³

It is not for nothing that the "war-mother" of syndicalism—the General Confederation of Labor in Paris—refuses to take part in the International Syndicalist Congress this autumn in London. The C.G.T. is itself rent by all the schism it can stagger under. It has had a dozen years of wrenching experience over every fundamental issue which distinguishes the movement. It has fought proportional representation and stuck to "one union, one vote" in order to preserve its sanctity of minority right. But the Miners, Railway Men, Printers and Textile Workers are obviously up in arms against the rule of minority vote in lesser unions.

Every scrap of news one gets of this struggle indicates that the more powerful unions are every day more committed to the severities of genuine organization, as in the nature of the case they must be, if discipline is to have the only thing which gives it value, power, and stability. It is these larger bodies which make short shrift with invading anarchists, because, when business has to be done, the anarchist is a nuisance. He wants insurrection and he wants it all the time. It is in the smaller unions that these scouts find themselves at home. As in this country, they overdo the strike, exhaust resources, create reaction within the general body, and strengthen reformist tendencies in the solider unions. It is this exact result now showing itself in France. Even the smaller unions are crying out against irresponsible strikes initiated by locals. They insist upon federal decision in order to

³ I read in a socialist sheet published in this city that one so prominent as Mr. Trautmann resigns from the more radical fighting section to join the reformist section who sniff at sabotage and direct action and who know very well that politics is not merely to be an occasional weapon, but a steady and serious business.

check hasty and passionate local action. This mirrors political experience as old as the race and shows how naïve and reactionary a great deal of this syndicalism is.

The eighth I.W.W. Convention sat this autumn nearly two weeks. Here was a host bent upon the destruction of capitalism, employing to that end strikes so incessant as to keep itself in a state of semi-exhaustion so far as all natural resources are concerned. Though it aims at a world organization, it is still destitute of everything that deserves the name organization. In an adopted resolution it says, "little real organization exists," because, as it continues,

1. Our speakers and organizers have concentrated their energies too much upon general agitation and have judged results solely by the amount of literature disposed of.

2. Many of our speakers and organizers have failed to teach industrial unionism and have instead preached against or for politics, or against religion, etc.

3. Our organizers have failed to properly follow up their work wherever an organization was started in an industry, but have tried instead to start as many locals as possible without first putting the locals on a sound basis.

In spite of this, a brisk fighting minority assumes there is already in the I.W.W. a dangerous centralization of authority and power. The only hope, insists this minority, is to decentralize; keep the outlying local centers free and independent; have done with convention and the Executive Board. What, one asks, will happen when, if ever, they get real organization?

If this degree of mutiny prevails when there is only a bluff at organization, what would happen when the one Big Union for which they strive got knit into some kind of working efficiency; when it had to deal with policies which concerned the whole body; the funds in its war chest, money grants to local strikes, and legal defence of its men in jail? A very minimum of organization necessary to do the work that itself lays out to do would stir rebellion, compared to which the recent protests at Chicago would be pallid enough.

These changes, deepening the gulf between the anarchist and the organizer, do not appear in ceremonial publications. But every accessible record of internal discussion shows that such constructive work as organized labor has to do (whether as socialist or trade unionist) has to be done after the reformist method. Co-operation with existing reform agencies has to be entered into.

This gives us definite consent to and alliance with advanced constructive political radicalism.

I therefore put the question, if syndicalism so early in its history reproduces the old experience within the groups calling themselves syndicalist—if even there, they find so soon the narrow limits of the mere fighting, atomistic tactics, what would happen if they had their way? What would happen if the citadels of capitalism fell and the one big union trooped in to take possession? Local, national, and international trade is still to go on and, if so, that trading must be organized, with centers of power at least as great as those which now exist, and probably far greater for this reason, that syndicalism on its own principles could not permit any one labor group—tanners, miners, gardeners, textile workers—to get the old graft of differential advantages. To avoid this, to see that such local unearned increment springing from lucky position, shifting of values, and trade currents, richer coal beds in one place than in another, some method that should carry such differentials automatically to all labor would surely require powerful and extensive organization.

Now that part of syndicalism which passes into the reform movement would lend itself naturally to this organic development. That part which proves recalcitrant will drift to its own anarchist belongings, leaving us still the oldest struggle in the world and the one which will longest endure: the contest between the ins and the outs,—between those to whom social control has been intrusted and those who itch and ache to get that power themselves. It is between these two tendencies that we have to find our way. With the reformist wing, it is perfectly easy for all the more radically minded to find points of constructive alliance in the whole body of advanced social legislation.

Our difficulties are not here, but with the revolutionary sections of syndicalism, which flout all these concessions. Beyond the line of serious law-breaking, against which any self-respecting society will defend itself, is there that in syndicalism which we must not only tolerate but welcome?

I wish to give one reason for such forbearance, and even such co-operation as forbearance implies. This justification must depend upon analogies, which I do not forget are beset by pitfalls.

Nothing characterizes syndicalism more than its reliance upon emotional reactions; upon the *feeling* of grievances as distinct from the more highly rationalized justification of those feelings. In the Peterloo days, English labor was striving for ends that

were as sacred as any for which men ever sacrificed, but the wise folk of that day thought it all absurd and criminal,—very much as they now think of syndicalism.

If the rationalized objections of economists and statesmen of that time were today compared with the dumb, instinctive assertion of labor striving for self-defence through organization, should we now question that labor's feeling was nearer right?

Of the whole body of factory and social legislation, from 1802 down, was not the impulsive protest of those who chiefly suffered a better guide than the sophisticated objections of those defending what they thought to be immediate business interests? Or, in spite of all error and eccentricity, especially about money, was not the cry of our Grangers, forty years ago, far closer to the coming fact than the self-complacent people, in editorial and other chairs, who ridiculed them? The Grangers first *felt* the need of railroad regulation, and even parcel post and income tax—and very slowly, out of that half-blind mass-agitation, we got the impulse and suggestion for doing the things which then seemed grotesque. The need of social change is felt at the point of irritation and discomfort long before it can be thought into shape for legislative and other uses.

Take again the long strife between adherents of the self-governing workshops and consumers' coöperation in England. Labor copartnership was the ideal of a very brilliant set of intellectuals,—highly trained lawyers like Ludlow and Judge Hughes, men of letters, men of wealth and extraordinary self-devotion like Vansittart Neale. These cultivated gentlemen were interested in man at the point of production. Ludlow thought one was acting like a god when he was producing, but like an animal when he was consuming. They insisted that the labor groups should have their share in the profits and all coöperation be organized to that end. For many years the consumers could not answer them or they answered timidly and clumsily. Many times they rather sulkily yielded to their superiors, but so many times discerned that the superiors were wrong and they were right, that the humbler party finally plucked up courage and fought it out on lines of consumers' coöperation.

I by no means claim that the consumers are to have the whole field to themselves; but, with something like certainty, we now see that the self-governing workshop is to do no such work as those intellectuals claimed for it. Consumers' coöperation has proved to have economic superiorities undreamt of by its oppo-

nents, and out of the tug of the day's work labor won its own triumph. It has been won by those who could not theoretically justify it, but who had the tenacity to follow their interests until experience had heaped up all the proofs they needed. Syndicalism is surely in a class with these pioneer uprisings. At its best it becomes a part of those newer social growths which are the basis of all our guessing at future economic and political development.

There is monotonous insistence among more reflective syndicalists that, as they rise up through their special industries, they are to be more and more the creative artists in wealth production. This is the labor copartnership ideal touched a little with poetry, and it is extremely likely that any possible future will have to allow for a great deal of this artistic individualism. After monopolies have gone once for all to the state and city; after consumers' coöperation has immensely extended its field wholly outside the socialized monopolies—a coöperation free, voluntary, and with plenty of competition to keep the state functions on their good behavior—it is fairly certain that syndicalism in this sense will be found to have made its own precious contribution. If we may believe that essential monopoly can really be brought under social control, an enormous part of the world's work may then develop freely, competitively, both from consumers' and producers' point of view. From the side of the producer, syndicalism would have its claim to partnership in that larger whole. Its motive is that of the trade union at work. Here it will fight for the best pay and conditions it can get, as against the consumers' determination of what shall be produced and how it shall reach him.

By itself syndicalism cannot perform the task of organizing and distributing differential advantages,—all the unearned increments that spring from sources beyond the individual and beyond the special industry. Every attempt to formulate this in hierarchies of organization carries them straight out of and beyond syndicalism. So much of syndicalism as has already expressed itself in French and Italian coöperative undertakings shows us the partial possibilities along labor co-partnership ideals, and at the same time shows us the limits within which it is likely to do its work.

Viewed thus as a *part* of industrial development, we should welcome it precisely as we welcome the service which socialism can perform. It, too, will never have the game all to itself. Both as agitator and as socializer of monopoly privilege, it will play a very large part in the future control of industry. But beyond it,

vast activities must be allowed for to which the word socialism very awkwardly and very inadequately applies.

I do not wish to overweight these illustrations, but they seem to me to have their own solemn warning for our time. They surely indicate the wisdom of listening not only with attention but with a kind of reverence to every persisting urgency which considerable labor bodies express from the working field. They may easily be the first warning intimations of social changes which have as much to teach us as the later and more defined stages of revolt.

It seems to me that we ask little enough for the syndicalism of our time in saying that it carries within itself very important, if disturbing, hints of coming change to which economically and politically the future will have in some degree to adapt itself.